

# Comic Cuts 2<sup>D</sup>

## AND LARKS

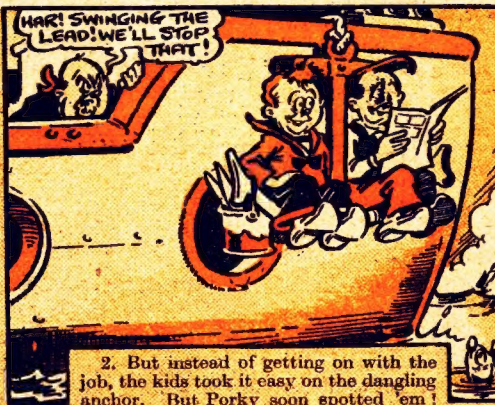
[No. 2,685.]

THE CRUSOE KIDS HOLD THE KEY TO THE SITUATION!

[MARCH 28, 1942.]



1. "Skipper says the ship wants some touching up," snapped Salty. "You two young rips can set about it now."



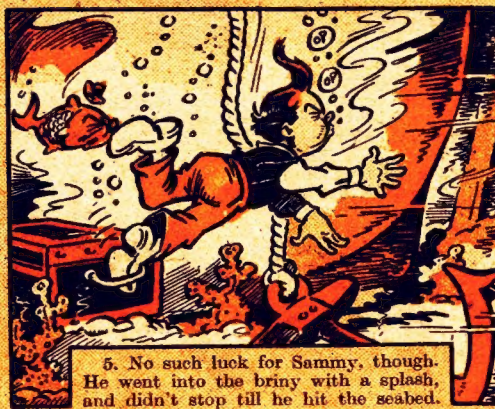
2. But instead of getting on with the job, the kids took it easy on the dangling anchor. But Porky soon spotted 'em!



3. So the tell-tale told Salty, and between them they got busy on a wheeze whereby to give the kids a nasty jolt.



4. Two split ticks later the anchor was let down with a rush. Shrimp was able to grab the open porthole all right.



5. No such luck for Sammy, though. He went into the briny with a splash, and didn't stop till he hit the seabed.



6. That's what he thought, when his tootsie caught in the handle of that big chest. Shrimp gave him a haul up.



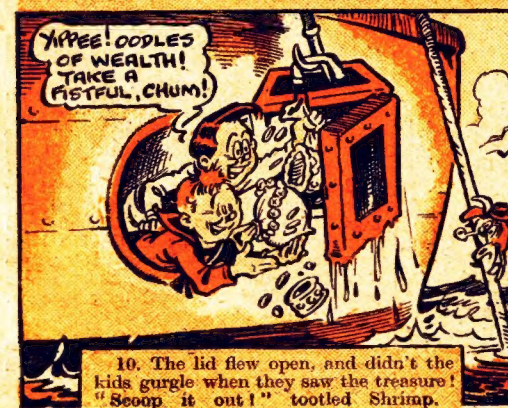
7. "Yippee!" he chortled, when the chest came into view. But the mates saw it. "Coo! Treasure!" piped Salty.



8. And he told Porky to go and get a boat-hook. "We'll see they don't get this!" piped Shrimp, grabbing the chest.



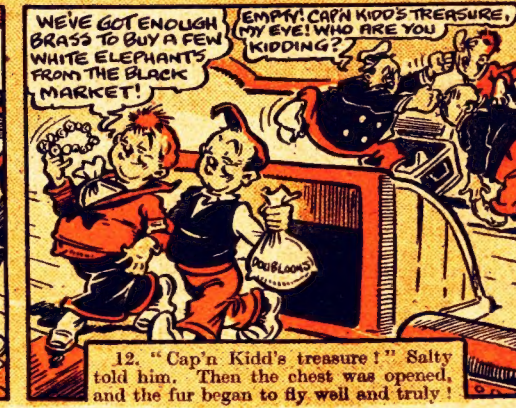
9. Salty had already caught the boat-hook in the handle to haul it up. As he tipped it over, Shrimp turned the key.



10. The lid flew open, and didn't the kids gurgle when they saw the treasure! "Scoop it out!" tootled Shrimp.



11. They cleared every bit of it, and 'twas an empty chest that the mates at last got on deck. Up came the skipper.



12. "Cap'n Kidd's treasure!" Salty told him. Then the chest was opened, and the fur began to fly well and truly!





The Black Rider.

"STICK 'em up there, stranger!" snapped a voice. "Up high!"

Joe, at the sharp command, rang out Rover Joe clicked his tongue with annoyance.

The warm afternoon and the peacefulness of the Wyoming trail had lulled the little adventurer into drowsiness. Comfortably astride old Sleepy's back, Joe had certainly not expected a hold-up—especially in daylight!

But now a masked bandit, straddling his horse between two trail-side trees, was hovering Rover Joe squarely with a gun.

"Friggin, I'm the Black Rider, and I don't usually give orders over my head the road again, grimly. "Get your hands up, pronto!"

"Oh, sure, sure! Anything to oblige," sighed Joe, obeying at once. The Black Rider rode ominously out of cover to back up his command.

The bandit edged his horse up closer until his knee was almost touching Sleepy's shoulder, and his gun pointed only a few inches from Rover Joe's nose.

"Well, dogface, you may be th' Black Rider, but you ain't so mighty smart," drawled Joe, as his captor ordered him to "spread out."

"Any bandit wastin' time on a stony-broke gent like me?"

"Broke, are you?" sneered the bandit. "Well, I'll just make sure for me—O-oh!"

A yell of pain and alarm ended the bandit's remark, and the too-confident bandit's legs, and a split second after the bandit and the Black Rider went flumping and toppling off the horse, flung clear out of stirrups and saddle by Sleepy's mighty heave!

He snatched the ground head-first, then rolled over, limp.

Dismounting, Joe stooped to pick up the bandit's gun. Then he was about to throw the fellow's arm off when the sudden clatter of hoofs drummed on his ears, and six horsemen came rapidly into view.

"Sheriff's posse!" murmured Joe. Spotting him, the posse spurred, then drew up in a swirl of dust.

"Hey! What's goin' on here?" barked the sheriff in a hard voice. "Who are you, stranger, and who's that guy on th' ground?"

"Rover Joe," Joe's name, sheriff," replied Joe politely. "As for this gent on th' ground, he's a piece'n! He tried to hold me up, but he didn't know my hoss doesn't like to see his boss robbed! This bandit called himself th' Black Rider before he—fell down bounp!"

"Jo's surprise, his mention of the Black Rider's name had a queer effect on Sheriff.

"The Black Rider!" he gasped, jumping down. "Gosh, so is it! It—the Black Rider—enough, boys! He's been caught!"

Then instead of unmasking the bandit or even complimenting Rover Joe, the sheriff turned on him with a scowl.

"Listen, you! I'm Sheriff Rawton, and I don't usually give orders over my head, phony to me!"

"We've been huntin' the Black Rider for—aw, gosh, and never caught him, you pull th' trigger off easy."

"You say your name's Rover Joe? Well, then, what's your name in business is this?"

"Sheriff Rawton, I guess my business is my business," Joe drawled. "But it's honest enough, so why should I be ashamed?"

"If you must know, I've ridden down th' valley to visit and help Mrs. Jordan and her son Dave at Creekside Ranch."

"What do I know about th' Jordans?" repeated Joe with silky smoothness. "Well, now, I was a friend of old Pop Jordan's, and I'll tell him he got shot fightin' rustlers down in th' Texas Panhandle."

"Then Mrs. Jordan," Dave moved up here, and they're buying a ranch—the Creeksides. They've worked hard without much luck, but now they've earned a prime piece of land."

Dave is goin' to drive over to th' big cattle-buyers' market at Drybone to-morrow."

Mrs. Jordan heard it was in this territory, and she said that Dave can't afford to employ any cowhands yet, so he'd be mighty grateful if I helped him herd his cattle to Drybone."

Joe rolled a cigarette. "And, to finish off, he added with dangerous calmness, "I know that Annie Jordan is over fifty, small, gray-haired, and as good as gold, while you, Dave, is a crook and a low-down buckaroo of twenty-one, who can work as hard and fight as hard as his father."

Now, is there anything else I can tell you about these Jordans? Well, I mean, if you want to know, don't throttle your nosiness, will you?"

"Sheriff Rawton," Joe growled. "Smart guy, ain't you?" he growled.

"Well, now, I'll tell you something! Your friends the Jordans ain't goin' to get any more trouble from me any other time—so." "Cue we're on our way now to rope Dave Jordan into gal."

Joe gasped, staggered by the news. But the sheriff, having fired his broadside, ignored the little rotmer and turned his attention to the Black Rider once more.

And, as Rover Joe soon saw, the sheriff did not seem to know about the Black Rider! Both he and his gunmen looked properly flummoxed.

"Well, What are you aimin' to do about this?" he demanded. Joe rallying from his shock.

"Huh! Take him to jail, o' course!" growled Rawton, although he still seemed oddly uncomfortable.

"Here, you, Jake and Smoky, lay th' Rider across his hoss and take him back. Put him in Cell No. 2."

"Back-oh, yeah, and you'd better get the doctor for him, too."

"That's right," murmured Rover Joe. "And th' poor fellah feels well again! I'll bring him some grapes and a pretty bunch o' flowers!"

"I'll send him a nice bunch out of you, Rover Joe!" the sheriff blurted.

"What are you goin' to do, and where are you headin' for now, I'd like to know."

"Mr. Sheriff, I'm comin' with you to th' Jordans' ranch," Joe retorted flatly. "You don't seem so keen on gaolin' th' Black Rider, but you are mighty eager to get your hands on young Red!"

"I'll tell you, if Dave is really guilty of an armed robbery, I'll see that he's innocent, then I'm goin' to see fair play!"

Joe swung to horse again. Then, while Joe of the possumen took the Black Rider back to Satebrush, the little rotmer allowed the two to swear at him contemptuously before following in their dust—wary but thoughtful.

### The Blow Up!

CREEKSIDE RANCH nestled on a branch of the River Sage. It was a small but pleasant ranch, fertile and well watered, with a new building and corrals herding witness to the owners' hard work.

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I'll put my cards on th' table. First off, the Black Rider has been plunderin' this territory for months, and he's had a chance to catch him. In fact, he's given us th' slip so easy that I've always suspected he had a buddy like you to hide him!"

"Secondly, he held up old Cy Strutt, th' trader, on th' Lone Butte trail last week, and he robbed him of three hundred dollars in new banknotes. Unfortunately for him, though, old Cy had just drawn them notes out of the bank, and the numbers were known!"

Sheriff Rawton paused a moment.

"Now then, we come to you, Jordan," he resumed. "Two days ago you rode into Satebrush to pay your monthly dollar in new banknotes. You paid it with three ten-dollar notes. They were new notes—and the numbers showed that they came from the same wad which the Black Rider stole from Cy Strutt! Here are the notes now—I brought 'em with me just to show there's no trickery—and Mr. Barham, our storekeeper, is willing to swear that you're the feller who paid them monthly store bill, didn't you?"

Jordan! You got them ten-dollar notes from your accomplice, the Black Rider, and I'd surely admire to know how you'd got them!"

"I got plenty to say, Rawton," Dave growled. "First, I don't know this Black Rider. Second, Jaber Barham, the storekeeper, is a well-known pal of mine."

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Menaced by the posse's guns, Dave allowed himself to be torn away from his weeping mother and taken from his home by the posse.

As for Sheriff Rawton, he was in noisily jovial mood when he and his posse returned to Satebrush. The posse had triumphed, and into the end cell, No. 41," he commanded, striding into his untidy office. Dave was helped out of the office, and leaving his men on guard, went straight across for a drink with his friend, Storekeeper Jaber Barham.

But Sheriff Rawton had descended, and the sheriff's mood had become bricker—and ogler.

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# RAFPAPERS

Another thrilling adventure of our dauntless R.A.F. chums.

## Out of the Sun.

THE airfield at Ayong Island, in the East Indies, was veiled in steam as the hot sun dried out the ground after a tropical rainstorm. Most of the planes of Squadron 15 were up on patrol, and came to Super-Deliant arrived in the latest shipment—stood on the runway ready to take off. On the fuselage was painted the famous "R" of Flying Lieutenant Tony Starr and Sergeant Badger, a winged skull in white.

A group of R.A.F. officers and men stood by the machine, and Squadron Leader Miles gave the final "brief" with a map spread out against the fuselage.

"Everything clear?" he said. "Avoid the south-east corner of Sumatra. Fly a hundred miles due east, and then direct on a sou'-easterly course to Malu Island. The landing-beach is on the south side, a firm stretch of white sand, the village inhabited by Chinese. Farther on there's a larger village, the home of native Dyaks."

"Not the head-bumping lad, sir?" Tony smiled smacking at mosquitoes settled on his back.

"You don't think so," answered Miles; "but it wouldn't do to trust 'em too far. Your job is to take Myneer Bushy Peters off the island, give his assistant, a young American known as Dick Spinning, Peters is the boss of the Harbin Oil Company, and the wells must be destroyed—by bombs, if necessary."

"We'll blow up the outfit," Tony nodded.

"That must be done in any event," Miles said. "There is every reason to believe the Japs will land in force any day. The Malu is a first-class grade, and you're to make sure the little yellow thongs don't get it. So you'll find it useful to have your ship you may happen to sight in the Java Sea."

Most of those Johnny Chinamen on Malu, bound by the way work of the oil company. You'll find 'em friendly, and they must be, told to make their way back to the nearest Allied base. Well, here's the map to take with you—and happy landings at Malu and a safe return by sundown."

Tony Starr swung into the cockpit and passed briefly for Sergeant Badger to settle in the turret, the Flying Skull roared upward through the haze into the sun.

After an uneven flight, the smoke of the oil refinery at Malu smudged the seascape. Keeping to the ceiling, Tony Starr wheeled over the island and saw men like insects moving on the blackened ground near the well of the refinery. No smoke, no fires were fired, and he presumed that the Japanese had not arrived yet.

With the coast behind him, Tony glided the plane in spirals down towards the sea on the south side of the island. No one could be seen on the beach, but the sea was gently nosed inshore and made an easy landing on the firm sand opposite the village.

A jungle-covered hill screened the plane's manoeuvres from the far side of the island where the well-woods were situated, but he was surprised that no one came from the thatched dwellings, the homes of the Chinese workers.

"Keep your gun lowered, Badger," Tony muttered. "Maybe the Japs don't know a Raf plane when they see one."

He swung out of the cockpit and, revolver in hand, crept up the beach towards the dwellings nestling under the coconut palms. No one was to be seen. The village appeared deserted, until he heard the creaking of wood inside a hut whose door was ajar. No one there. He peered into the shadows and peered inside.

A trapdoor was lifting slowly and a



"Don't shoot, buddy!" he gasped. "Dick Spinning is the moniker!"

A lean form rose out of the floor like a grey ghost. A smaller apparition followed the first.

"Stand fast!" Tony snapped. "Who are you?"

The taller man jerked his right hand from his pocket and a revolver clattered to the stone floor.

"Heek! 'Don't shoot, buddy!' he gasped. 'Dick Spinning is the moniker, and this is Chin Lee, the worst cock between Colombo and Columbia. You're a Britisher!'"

"Tony Starr, of the R.A.F., Dick. My rear-gunner, Sergeant Badger is the cop on the coral carpet." Maybe you had the wire that you and your boss were to be evacuated. But what's up? Why do you chase smooching here, and where's Peters?"

The American picked up his gun and staggered with eyes blinking into the tropical sunshine. He was bearded, unshaven, and dirty; and the Chinaman looked as if he had been dragged beneath a heavy stone.

"Guess you're kinda late in the day for collecting Peters, pard," Dick Spinning mumbled. "The Japs are here, the yellow stinks, there's a hundred of them crawling around the oil-wells area. A boat flying the Dutch flag put in to our jetty—a dirty trick. She was Jap, and she had a gun with again after landing these murderous swabs."

"Where's Peters been killed?"

"Maybe not yet," answered Spinning; "the rattlers rounded him up—Dutch and about a score of the Chinese boys. The other Johnny Chinamen showed up in one of the small junks they've got hidden on the coast, but the Japs sunk it with all hands by mortar-fire to the orders of a long-toothed rat called Captain Mukaki, who seems to be leader of the lot."

"I guess they reckoned Chin and myself went West with that boatload, since none of the makers have been searching for us—lost boys, and me in the village. Anyhow, we went to a hide-out in this hut, and came out for a look-out. We'd heard your plane zooming around."

Tony gritted his teeth. "I guess you caught the guy you blokes back to Ayong, and lively," he grunted. "But I don't fancy shoving off without giving Peters a chance, if he's still alive. We were told a tribe of 'em somewhere near. If we could rope them in to help—"

"Huh!" Tony said. "Old Penga Bung, their chief, is a wild old bird," the American interposed. "He's got a proper respect for the 'thundersticks' of the Japs. We saw 'em fire before, and doesn't like it."

"M-m-m, no like neither," gulped Chin Lee, coughing and pointing towards the jungle. "More better we go flipper-ty quick-time with kind friends in honourable airplane."

"You're a coward," Chin Lee exclaimed. "Dick Spinning. 'I've thought of something. He took a smooth black object from his pocket and showed it to Tony. 'See this thing?'" he said. "It's what the Dyaks call a batn—a thunderbolt stone. They reckon it

dropped out of the sky and is loaded with magic."

Well, old Penga Bung gave one to Peters once to me, because we fired up his son O.K. when the lad broke a leg against a tree in avoiding a charging buffalo in the jungle. The chief said if ever we wanted the Dyaks' help, we had only to send him one of these batu stones. Here, Chin! You send it to old Penga Bung, pronto, and hand him this with my compliments."

The Chinaman's eyes met near the top of his squat nose.

"Luv-a-duckee!" he wailed. "Me no likes. Debased Dyaks' custom. 'Beat it!' the American snapped. "Bogus you can't give a batu stone to me; you proved it the way you hared across to the village here. Now get that whole Dyak tribe on the warpath, and I'll have the heathen hide off you!"

"Better still, Chin, decided, he would turn round and go home all return with the statement that the chief refused to budge."

Chin Lee left the end of the coral beach and entered the jungle, a couple of Dyak hunters seized him for being a white man, and he had to show the "magic" batu to avoid being "chopped" then and there. So Chin Lee, the sergeant, Badger, and large hut, and Penga Bung summoned all his warriors and marched back with him to the Chinese village.

The brown-skinned warriors came trooping along in wearing parrot feathers in their black hair and sarongs around their waists. They wore native shirts. They wore parangs—heavy, curved knives—at their sides and carried long, thin spears. The chief, Chin Lee, the sergeant, Badger, uttered an exclamation of disgust. "Knives and sticks!" he growled. "A lot of them, but they're no more than the Jap monkeys armed to the teeth with rifles and tommyguns!"

At Ayong, the sergeant came from the jungle, and the roar of a leopard mingled with a full-throated bellow of pain.

"Gosh! Look out!" yelled Dick Spinning.

There came the thunder of hoofs and a great breaking saplings and twigs. Then, charging between the coconut palms, came a long-horned wild buffalo, with a black leopard clinging to its back.

Tony raised his revolver, although unwilling to fire lest the report should startle the warriors. The leopard sprang across the narrow island. But to his amazement there was no need. The leopard rolled from its back and kicked its life out on the coral sand.

"Miracle," yanked the American. "head-on, mister! They ain't afraid of horns, tipped with the deadly poison of the ipoh-tree."

Meantime, Dick Spinning, who had asked the native tongue, explained to Penga Bung what they wanted. The prospect of an expedition to the island was a good thing, the chief much more than to Chin Lee, the cook. But he had given his promise to the Japs, and he dared not break his word for fear of "losing face" among the tribesmen.

"You're coming with us, Tony. There's a good fity of us now to tackle

these Jap rattlers, and it's worth a risk to save old Peters, who's a good-hearted galeot. Let's go!" The Dyaks, through the jungle, quietly cutting the tangled vegetation with their razor-sharp spears, and the Japs, on the whole part, deployed among bushes near the oil-wells.

A grim sight met their eyes as they crept forward. A party of Japanese soldiers under a squat, long-toothed officer, who proved to be Captain Mukaki, were firing at the British, European, and a couple of dozen Chinaman into a shallow pit.

That's Peters and some of our boys, the sergeant said.

He pressed forward and levelled his revolver. A twig cracked underfoot, and roused the Japs. They glared and glimpsed some of the Dyaks advancing. Without taking careful aim in their alarm, they fired a volley from the hip, and bullets lashed over the heads.

The guns of Tony, Badger, and the American made better shooting. Three Japs, with their backs to the sea, squealed and threshed in the air. Then the silent killers got to work.

The deadly darts sped through the air, and a second volley from the British squad stumbled in their death-throes in the lead. Only Mukaki escaped the attack, and he was seen to be shouting "Bansai!" he raced forward and fired wildly. Then, suddenly, Tony flung himself at him and brought him down with a crash that left him half-dead.

The remaining Japs on the island were rushing on their water-skins and huts. They fell into line with iron discipline under a loud-mouthed sergeant. "Which was their mistake?" he asked. "The sergeant, Badger, and Dick Spinning manned a couple of machine guns left near the beach, and the Japs were downed like a man."

"They asked for it, the brutal little bastards," the sergeant panted, "and they've got a beautiful! Mighty glad we're in time, Peters, old pard!"

"The sergeant's a first-class man," gasped. "Nearly we was stuck mit prickers like leeto pigs!"

"That's what you call the fuming Captain Mukaki to his feet!"

"We'll take lucky Mucky back to Ayong with 'em," he rasped, "though as he's a first-class warrior, more than the rest of the scum!"

The Japanese officer foamed at the mouth.

"Pigs—debased pigs!" he screeched. "More brave and honourable Japanese will pay us for this despicable dirt-fuiness, Baggar!"

But the defiant cheer ended in a gurgling squal. His hands clawed at his throat, and tiny black dots and deadly appeared against the yellow skin. Then he slumped to the ground, his knees bent, a powdery cloud, and stiffened sharply.

"Who—wh—did that?" croaked Tony.

Chin Lee handed back a blow-pipe he had matched from Penga Bung and shuffled slowly forward.

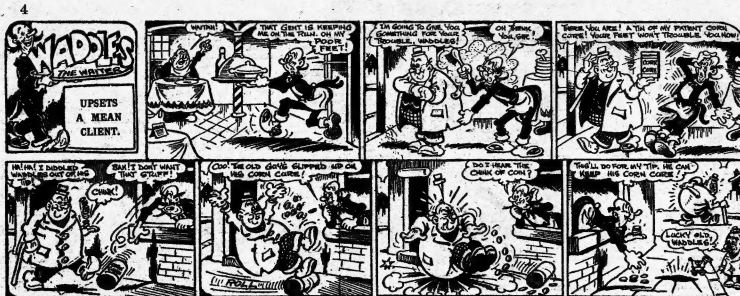
"Muckee killum plucky! Muckee blotters—me killum Muckee!"

"You're a good fellow, that seems fair to me," murmured Dick Spinning, "though it's not the white man's way, you got darned heathen!"

They went only to set fire to the oil-wells and refinery, and then the whole party headed back across the beach as passengers.

They were through the mica hood of the rear gun-barrister, Badger saw the last of Malu, wreathed in the smoke of the burning village. The Japs, and the Japanese invaders would steal precious oil for the Mikado's war-machine.

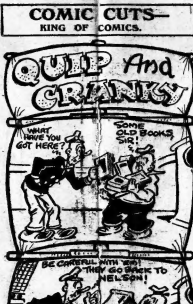
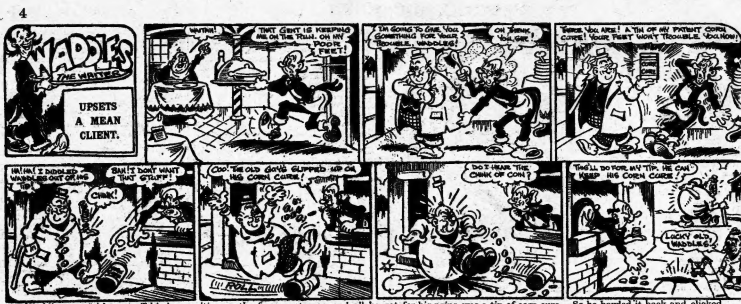
(Don't miss the thrill-packed rest of our story in the next issue, on sale Thursday week.)



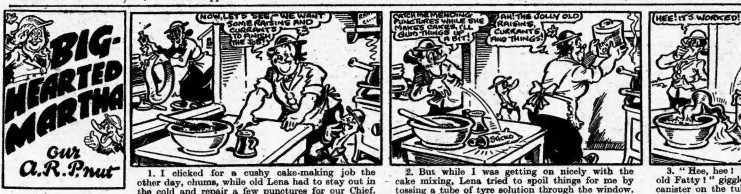
Wadlee was fairly run off his legs waiting on the fussy customer, and all he got for his pains was a tin of corn cure. So he bowled it back and chinked.

## PLUM AND DUFF, THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE!





## PLUM AND DUFF, THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE!





And  
PENNYSome  
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NELENN!

Penny was ordered to catch a much-wanted spy, little knowing he was hiding in that barrel until he got let down. Then he put him through the hoop properly.

## BIG BEN AND LITTLE LEN, THE LARKY LADS!



1. "I'm the local champ, I am!" bragged Ben, biffing the punchball. "Why, this morning I knocked out six toughs!" "Cool!" piped Len.

2. Very impressed was he, and when he went outside he bragged about what Ben could do. "My brother will take yours on!" said one lad.

3. "And, what's more, he'll knock the stuffing out of him!" "Oh, will he?" cried Len as he booted his nibs. "Fetch him along and see!"



4. So Tim Tadger departed and came back in a few minutes with his big brother Bill, ready to do his stuff. "You're wanted, Ben!" cried Len.



5. Now Ben had seen all that had been going on and he wasn't too keen about taking on the challenger. And so, to put the wind up Bill—



6. Ben stuffed a blown-up football bladder inside his pullover. Then out he strode, and cried: "Well, where's this chap? I'll show him!"



7. "Wow!" gasped Bill. "I don't think that's it matters." And he was about to whizz away when the flag-seller came cooing up to Ben.



8. "Do buy a flag, sir!" she crooned. With that, she jabbed one in Ben's manly chest. Of course it punctured the bladder. That did it!



9. It gave the show away properly. "Tough guy, hey?" roared Bill. "I'll make mince-meat of you!" And Ben went through it!



4. I not only stirred in the currants but the sticky stuff as well. Then just as I was wondering why it was getting stiff—



5. I had to dash off to try and rescue the milk. But as the sticky cake mixture still clung to the spoon—



6. It caused quite a stir when it suddenly pulled the spoon backwards and gave Lena a smack on the sneller.



7. "Ha, ha! Up to your tricks again, are you?" I laughed. "Bob down, Lena!"—MARTHA. 29-3-42

# THE CRIME-SMASHER!

## A Strange Attack.

THE phone bell tinkled and when Kenton Steel picked up the receiver.

"This is Mr. Digby Tremaine speaking," came in a man's cultured voice from the other end, as soon as the crime-smasher had announced who he was. "Could you possibly come down to my place right away? I have a most extraordinary thing has happened to me during the night. I have been the victim of a most abominable outrage."

"I am sorry to hear that," replied Steel. "What happened exactly?"

"I would rather wait till I see you before I give you the details," said Tremaine. "As it is, I can hardly trust myself to speak—it is so outrageous, so unheard-of. I would like your expert advice at once, and if you can come down—"

"I can do that," broke in Steel.

He scribbled Tremaine's address down and promised to be with the gentleman in less than an hour. He kept his word, and it was after a swift, uneventful run that Steel and his assistant, Nutty Brown, reached the pleasantly situated house of his client in the heart of the country.

They rang the bell and in a few moments the door was opened by someone who kept behind it, completely out of the expected, the crime-smasher hesitated for a moment.

"Come in, please—and excuse this reception," said a voice from behind the door which Steel recognized as Tremaine's.

Steel stepped into the hall with Nutty, and the door was closed behind them. Next moment, both gasped and stared—wide-eyed at the man who had admitted them.

"Good—good heavens!" gulped Steel.

His amazement was justified. Digby Tremaine, standing before him in the hall, was a man of his own height, and he evidently wore a beard and a moustache normally.

But only one side of the moustache remained the other had been clipped off. On the opposite side of his face his beard had suffered similarly treatment, while his hair, grown fairly long, had been snipped in patches in a dozen places.

"I can understand your amazement, Mr. Steel," said Tremaine. "And you can understand my own too, when I woke up this morning, looked in the glass and realized I was looking like this."

He invited Steel and Nutty into a bright, comfortably furnished room, as soon as the three were seated, he told his story.

"For some years I have always worn a beard and moustache," he said. "These photographs you see on the wall, taken fairly recently, will show you what I looked like and how I sided. And I can I was in bed last night. Yet this morning I discovered that this—this had happened. Someone must have broken into the house during the night."

"But didn't you hear anything?"

"Nothing at all," was the reply. "I always sleep very soundly, and even a thunderstorm would not wake me. I am a little deaf. Who on earth can have done this—and why? That's what I can't for the life of me think—anybody I have sought your expert advice."

"It certainly is most extraordinary," said Steel. "At the moment I might think it was done for a joke, but surely no practical joker would go so far as that, and it is a possibility of course, that somebody has done it out of spite—somebody who has a grudge against you. Can you think of anybody—anybody doesn't like you?"

"My dear Mr. Steel, I pride myself on not having an enemy in the world!" cried Tremaine emphatically. "I have never here for many years and am friends

with practically the whole village. Now and again I run up to town, where I have many more friends. But no enemies—none at all—anywhere."

Steel nodded and his brow furrowed. "All the same," he said, "this hacking of your hair and beard was done for some reason or other. Whoever did it took a big risk."

"If I ever find out who did it," he retorted Tremaine, "I'll give him something to remember me by. Why I can't show myself outside this house till goodness knows when. I couldn't possibly be seen in public like this—I should be a laughing stock. It will take some time for my hair and beard to grow again properly, too."

Steel gave a grunt and, getting up, crossed to the table and studied the photographs of his client. They showed him to be a handsome man whose long flowing hair and neat beard and moustache suited him well. Suddenly he swung round on Tremaine.

"Tell me," he said, "have you any particular enmities in the neighborhood that this—this unfortunate business will prevent you from keeping?"

"Yes, as it happens, I was going up to town this very evening," was the reply. "There is an annual affair of a society to which I belong, a social reunion. It's held at the Dimchester Hotel. There is dinner and a few speeches and a band, after which—"

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"Some very well-to-do people attend

## CUTS.

Tremaine," he said quietly. "It decides me as to what I intend doing, at any rate."

"And what is that, might I ask?" queried Tremaine.

Steel stated that function at the Dimchester Hotel this evening," said Steel quietly. "Unless I am very much mistaken, the gentleman we are so anxious to trace will also be there. So perhaps you will be good enough to remove one of those photographs from your album after all, and let me have it."

Having gone over the house to try to find out how the intruder had entered during the night, and satisfied himself that he could easily have climbed up to Tremaine's bedroom window from outside, Steel took his leave and drove back with Nutty to town.

## At the Dimchester.

THAT evening, half an hour before the social reunion was due to commence, Kenton Steel, in evening dress and carrying a small bag, entered the Dimchester Hotel. He was in conversation with the manager in the latter's private room.

As the result, a few minutes later Steel was shown into a small room at the rear of the hotel.

Opening the bag, he took from it the photograph of Digby Tremaine which he had brought with him. The other contents of the bag consisted of disguise and make-up.

For some time Steel sat before the looking-glass, looking at his

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passed on, leaving the crime-smasher chuckling at the unsuspected complacency of his man's attitude.

Still he remained where he was behind the curtains. Suddenly his eyes narrowed and his man's head was turned who passed not many yards away from where he stood, dancing with an excitement.

Nor was it surprising that this man aroused Steel's interest. For he was Digby Tremaine, to the little, round, little man was the distinct crime-smasher now was!

"That's the bird I'm after!" muttered Steel. "He was at the dinner. He must have come in later. Now to find out just who he is—and where he is."

From that moment Steel hardly let his quarry out of his sight for a moment. The man danced a smart dancer and did not miss a single dance. In addition, Steel noticed, he had a different partner each time.

The dance he was in progress for over an hour when there came the first rift in the lute to mar the pleasure of the guests. In fact, the dancing finished and the dancers were taking a welcome respite, when a woman gave a gasp and looked down at her wrist.

"My diamond bracelet!" she exclaimed, staring wide-eyed at her partner, an elderly, white-haired gentleman who said "good night!"

Steel heard her words quite plainly, for she was not very far away from him. He glanced at his watch and the conversation spread and increased when one after another other ladies discovered the loss.

A hubbub arose, there were knots of excited people in a dozen places. And as the waiting ladies noticed, Digby Tremaine's other double was making for one of the exits.

With jaw set firmly, Kenton Steel dashed forward, under the curtained alcove and went after him. He saw the man was making for the cloak-room, where he put down his hat and the counter and asked the attendant for his hat and coat.

But even as they were placed on the counter, Kenton Steel fired forward.

"Stop!" he shouted.

The other swung round and stared incredulously at his double, pointing an accusing finger at him.

And before he could get over the shock, Kenton Steel, his hand on his bound. Grasping the man's wrist firmly with one hand he wrenched off his false beard and moustache with the other.

"So it's you!" Steel cried, recognizing the clean-shaven face he had seen in the "Gentleman Haynes, expert cat burglar and pickpocket!"

Haynes had recovered now, and he suddenly became like wild-cat in an endeavour to get free of Steel's grip and escape. But the crime-smasher was too quick for him, and the other was quickly forthcoming.

In a few minutes Gentleman Haynes, a man of middle age, was being safely under lock and key once more. On being searched, all the missing jewelry was recovered, and the man was quickly forthcoming.

He it was who had broken into Digby Tremaine's home the previous night and cut his hair, moustache, and beard, leaving the crime-smasher responsible for him to go to the Dimchester Hotel that evening. He had got to know that Tremaine had attended the functions regularly for years past.

Haynes had also taken the invitation to the party, and he was now, as he said, in a very awkward position. He had helped himself to the missing jewelry, and he was now in a very awkward position. He had helped himself to the missing jewelry, and he was now in a very awkward position.

So the crime-smasher's theory proved quite correct. It was because he suspected a well-known and clever crook to be at work that Steel had not dared to show his face in the evening, or that he would have been recognized.

As he was posing as Digby Tremaine, he had been able to mix as much as he needed with the other guests and keep a watchful eye on the crime-smasher.

The result, the Gentleman Haynes went back to prison for a long term.

(Another Kenton Steel story in our magazine this week. The next will be on sale Thursday week.)

## MAKING SURE!

## Lawn Mower Wanted.

It was half-past six on a Friday evening, and Horace Huggett had just arrived home from business. Having kissed his wife, he sat down to the tea which she had all ready for him.

"Well, it looks like being a fine day to-morrow, my dear," he said after a while. "So as I shan't be going to the office, I'll put in a busy day at home. And one thing I'm going to do is cut the grass on the lawn. It was growing badly."

"What about a mower?" asked his better half. "You know we haven't got one."

"I've arranged for that," replied Horace. "My friend Charlie Chibnall has a lawn mower, when I saw him to-day he said he'd be only too pleased to lend it to me."

"But how is he going to get it here?" asked Mrs. Huggett. "He lives a good twenty minutes' walk away."

"I know. But he's going to run it over in his car some time this evening," explained Horace. "He said he'd be along with it before dark. So I'll see him roll up in about an hour or so."

But time passed, and dusk fell without any sign of the expected car with the lawn mower.

"It's a rotten nuisance!" muttered Horace. "To-morrow will be my only day for next month to mow, and if I don't cut the lawn to-morrow it will be in a terrible state. There's no one else I know who's got a mower to lend me, except old Charlie. If he doesn't turn up, and he doesn't look like doing so now, I'll have to go to his place and fetch it myself. That'll make sure of having it to-morrow. It's a good way, but it won't matter in the dark."

Now Horace was a local air raid warden, and was due to go on duty at ten o'clock that night. So he decided to walk over to Charlie Chibnall's house after nine o'clock, get the mower and take it to his own little back quarters for the night, bringing it the rest of the way home next morning when he came.

Accordingly, wearing his tin hat, he said good-night to his wife shortly after nine and set off. The night was pitch black, with no moon, and for some time, till he got used to the darkness, he had to grope his way.

Owing to the darkness, it took him more than twenty minutes before he reached the house in which Charlie lived. It seemed blinder than ever, and he had to keep touching the railings to guide his steps.

"Ah, here we are!" he muttered at last. Of course, I would come away without my tin hat, but this is Charlie's house right enough."

He pushed open the gate, walked up the short path to the front door, and rang the bell. In a few moments the door was opened and there stood Charlie Chibnall.

"Horace!" he cried. "I didn't expect to see you this evening."

"No, but I expected to see you, Charlie," replied Horace, "and you promised to run your lawn mower over in your car."

"Yes, I know," and he winked.

## EDITOR'S CHAT.

## BALLO, OUTLIES!

As you see, this number of your favourite fun paper is not quite so big as usual, but that's because it's doing its bit to help the national defence collection, and as you will all be contributing to your most desired, all your popular favourites and editorials are as usual.

Yes, they're all here, and they will all be with you again in our next issue, which happens to be our Grand Easter Fun Number. It will be on sale next Thursday, April 2nd, a day earlier than usual.

Well, thanks, that's all I've room for this week, except to tell you to carry on with the good and necessary work of saving and handing over all the waste paper you can collect.

Your very good friend,

CLARENCE CUTS.



Horace staggered along with the bobby on his heels.

sorry," said Charlie. "But the fact is my car's broken down. I've been tinkering with it all the evening and can't find out what's wrong."

"Oh, so that's the reason you didn't turn up?" said Horace. "Well, I'm very keen on having that mower to cut my lawn to-morrow; I'll be my only chance for about a month. So if it makes no difference to you, old man, I'll take it along with me now."

"What! Push it through the streets at this time of night?" cried Charlie.

"Yes, Wags!" said Horace. "All right, if it suits you, it suits me," said Charlie. "I'll go and get it."

He disappeared, and a few minutes later he came out by the side gate, pushing the lawn mower. The whirr of the roller seemed to make a din in the silence of the night.

"I'm afraid it's a bit noisy," Horace explained Charlie, rather unnecessarily. "It can do with a good oiling."

"That's all right, old man," replied Horace. "I'll oil it well to-morrow morning before I start operations."

"Many thanks, and I'll give you have it back to-morrow evening."

"If my car's O.K.—and I expect it will be," said Charlie—"I'll run over and fetch it. Good-night, old sock."

Horace bade him good-night and pushed the mower down to the pavement. Then he trundled it along, its whirrings and clankings rousing the echoes.

"Borks! What a row it does make!" he muttered after a while. "I think I'll carry it for a bit; that'll be quieter."

So he heaved it up across his shoulder and plodded on. He soon found that the mower was no light weight, and as the night seemed to be darker still, his progress became slower.

Every fifty yards or so he had to change his grip, and he had to place it down on the ground for a rest.

And then, all suddenly, came the unexpected.

"Here you are you doing with that mower at this time of night?" barked a voice.

Blinking through the gloom, Horace made out the form of a burly policeman.

"I'm taking it home, constable," he replied. "That is to say, I'm not exactly taking it home—not till to-morrow morning."

"Here, what's this?" demanded the copper suspiciously. "You don't seem to know where you're going. And I've never seen a funny thing to be carrying through the streets at this hour. Where did you get it?"

"From a friend—he lent it to me," was the reply.

"Oh, so it isn't your own, then?" said the copper. "This looks very fishy to me. I think you'd better come along with me to the station for inquiry."

Horace let down the mower from his shoulder with a crash at these words.

"What! Let it go?" he said. "But I haven't pinched it! It belongs to a friend of mine. His name's Charlie Chibnall, and as he couldn't bring it here to fetch it this evening, I walked over to see it. I particularly want to use it to-morrow, so I'm making sure."

"Ho! Is that your story?" said the doubled copper. "Well, I think we'd better check up on it. Where does this friend of yours live?"

"In Snaggleson Avenue," replied Horace.

"Right! Then we'll go along to his house and get him to confirm your statement," was the policeman's ultimatum. "Pick that mower up and get moving."

Horace decided that it was useless trying to argue the point, so he slung the mower once again across his shoulder, about-turned, and retraced his steps to his friend's house.

Snaggleson Avenue was reached at last, and a few minutes later Horace pulled up in the inky darkness.

"Here we are, constable," he said. "Here's where my friend lives."

He waited at the gate with the mower, whilst the constable went up to the front door and rang the bell. It was some time before there was any response, but at last the sound of bolts being drawn was heard and the door opened.

"What is it?" boomed a voice out of the darkness.

The constable switched on his torch, revealing the face of the person at the door. Horace, staring at it, gave a violent start, for the face was that of a total stranger.

"There's a chap here walking along with a lawn mower which he says you lent him," said the constable. "Do you know anything about it?"

"I don't even know what you're talking about, constable," replied the man at the door. "I've no lawn mower to lend anybody, for a start, and—"

"That'll be sufficient!" broke in the bobby. "Good-night!"

He strode down to the gate and grasped Horace firmly by the arm.

"I'm taking you to the station," he said.

"But I—I've told you the truth!" cried Horace. "We—I've come to the wrong house. I've made a mistake in the dark. My friend lives a bit farther along the road."

"Ho, does he?" snorted the policeman. "Well, I'm not going to lose you, wordily going the wrong way at this time of night. You're coming along with me. Quick march!"

Like one in a trance, Horace was taken to the police station, pushing the mower now regardless of the row it kicked up, for he was too tired to carry it any more.

At last the station was reached, and the light on entering almost blinded Horace. He was in the middle of the changing-room to see three or four others beside himself and the bobby who had brought him in.

"I caught this chap wandering about with the lawn mower, sergeant," began the policeman. "He tried to make his friend had sent it to him, but—"

"It's true!" burst out Horace. "There is my friend, or coming in now! What a lot of luck! That's Charlie Chibnall!"

"Are you the Charlie I entered at that moment. He stared in amazement at Horace, and then demanded to know who was wrong," Horace explained.

"It's quite all right, constable," laughed Horace. "He's an old friend of mine, and I gave him the mower yesterday."

"Well, that's a job I happened to put along just now to talk about that darts match our club plays against you boys on Wednesday."

"You're telling me," said Horace, with relief. "Of course, I should have seen the night in it. And I'm on duty at ten too."

"Cool! I didn't notice you were a constable," said the policeman. "I couldn't see in the dark. Well, sorry and all that, sir."

"That's all right," laughed Horace. "All's well that ends well, and I haven't far to go to my headquarters. So good-night, gentle all! I'm on my way. Good-night, Charlie!"

And with a broad grin on his face, now that he was out of his troubles, Horace went on his way, singing merrily to himself that the constable made as he pushed it.

(Our Grand Easter Number will be on sale Thursday, April 2nd.)

28-3-42



## RIDDLES?

1 Why are we very obedient?

2 What is the difference between a T and a A?

3 Why did the Blush?

4 Why does a rickety hate you?

5 What is the quickest way to get

To Find the ANSWERS

Face this paper towards a mirror

1 What is the difference between a T and a A?

2 What is the difference between a T and a A?

3 Why did the Blush?

4 Why does a rickety hate you?

5 What is the quickest way to get

To Find the ANSWERS

Post this Coupon to-day in open envelope—Id. stamp.

To the CHIEF OVALTINE, 184, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7.

I enclose a label from a tin of 'Ovaltine' which must contain a label from an Ovaltine tin. Please send, without cost to me, the Official Rule Book of the League.

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

(Write in BLOCK letters)

IMPORTANT.—Every application for membership must contain a label from an Ovaltine tin. This can be easily removed by running a knife round it.

A.P. 28-3-42.



# PINHEAD and PETE

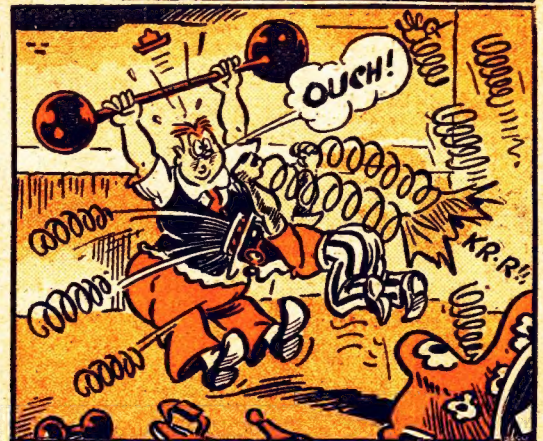
SPRING A SURPRISE ON THEIR LANDLORD!



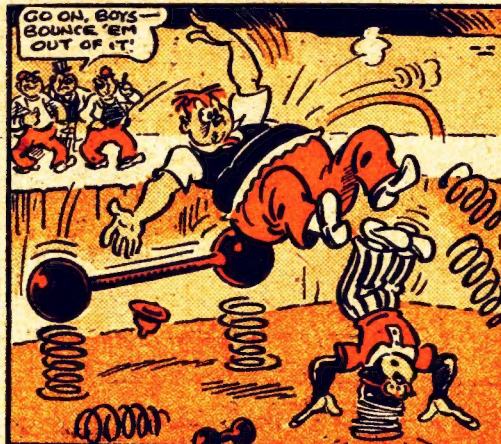
1. Without a word of warning, the landlord called round on our pals for his rent, the old optimist! "Sorry, sir, we're bust!" sobbed Pinhead. And his nibs said he'd send the brokers to throw them out!



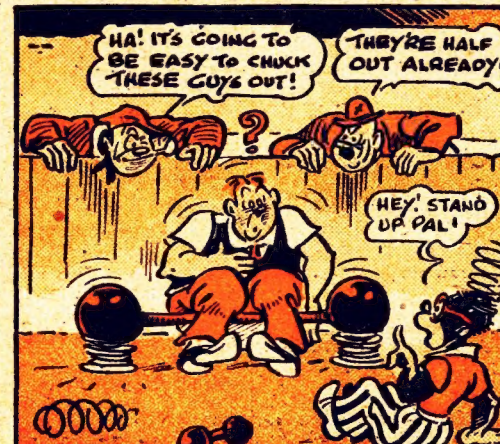
2. "Well, so long as we know, it'll be quite all right!" chirped Pinhead. "The best thing to do, my little black blob, is to prepare to meet those brokers gents when they arrive." So they got busy.



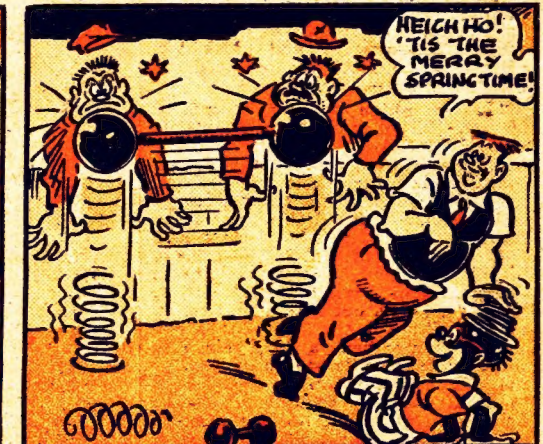
3. Yes, out in the garden they started to get in fighting trim with barbell and springs from the old sofa. Pete used those as developers. But they came out under the strain, and he biffed his pal!



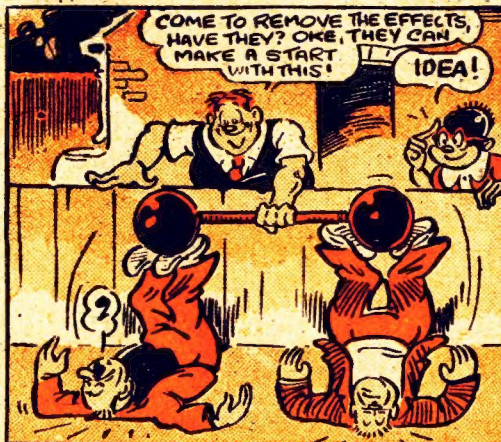
4. Then a sort of circus started. Pete, the coon landed downside up on one spring, whilst Pinhead dropped his barbell on two more and followed it up.



5. He landed right on the crossbar in a sitting posish, just as the two hefty brokers men arrived. But Pete, seeing them, told Pinhead to get up.



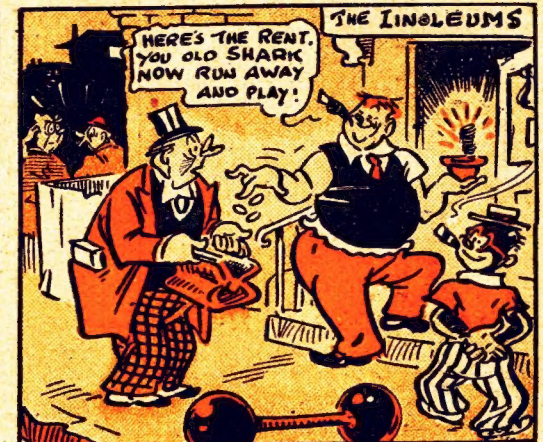
6. And Pinhead promptly obliged. Whereupon the visitors had a nasty jar. For the springs shot up the barbell, which caught them under the bristly chin.



7. And after that the chucking out of our enemies was right off the menu. Seeing them flat on their backs, Pinhead placed the barbell on their feet.



8. Then Pete got busy, and proceeded to give a marvellous gymnastic performance on the crossbar, which promptly attracted a large admiring crowd.



9. Before the brokers' men came round, bringing the performance to a close, our pals had raked in enough spondulicks to pay the landlord his arrears.

